SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY,

NANDED

Synopsis of the proposed Ph.D. Thesis In

English

Entitled

Depiction of Indian culture and tradition in the select novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Submitted by

Mr. Satish Bhagwan Funne

Research Student

Under the supervision of

Dr. Datta G. Sawant

Asst. Professor,
Dept. of English,
Toshniwal Arts, Commerce and Science College,
Sengaon. Dist. Hingoli

Jan-2020

Depiction of Indian culture and tradition in the select novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Introduction:

Culture is the way of living which a group has developed and transmits it from one generation to the next. It includes certain concepts, skill and habits. 'Culture' is one of the most significant and encouraging subjects of study. It is comprehensive terms. 'Culture' is not born and created but it develops and grows in the people. It is a way of life distinguishable from another. It is also an ambiguous term refusing a clear-cut definition. Culture is nothing but one's habits, customs and modes of thought. Culture- studies are done in league with literary studies, history and philosophy. It entails the detail study of gender, race and ethnicity.

The word culture comes from the Latin world 'culturs' which means 'care'. It is complicated word in English language. In the 15th century renaissance culture meant mental cultivation. It meant refinement. So, the words culture and uncultured were used. The Germans in the 18th century used the word for enlightenment. Anthropologist E.B. Tylor defines culture as:

"Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

The term culture has different meaning in different disciplines. The anthropologists and social scientists have various definitions and consequently, there is no monistic view of culture. Rather it encompasses the whole way of human life. It is very dynamic, progressive and interactive.

William Raymond defines culture as: "An individual's habits of mind; the state of intellectual development of a whole society; the arts; and the whole way of life of a group or people"

Indian culture is ancient one. It has its own importance in the world. It enlightens and teaches us the humanity. A man who has grown-up in this culture has witnessed its' greatest impact on the other cultures in the world. 'Indian culture' has undergone tremendous change in the course of several thousand years of its history, but its continuity has not been broken. Militant 'Aryan' hordes entered Indian around 1500 BC and subjugated the people of the city civilization that thrived here as well as the tribal in habitants. From the time to nowadays the process of changing is continuously followed by the people in India. In between this long time Indian people goes through so many attacks by other cultures and now Indian culture is mixture of so many cultures. However, having their different characters, it has become genuine and pure. Some characteristics of Indian culture are, Antiquity, continuity excessive emphasis on rituals, belief in the doctrine of Karma, the caste system and unity in diversity of Indian culture.

Indian women novelists have created their own form to suit their own subject matter and to present their problems. They have developed their own style and their own identity which expresses feminine sensibility. The majority of novels written by Indian women writers depicted the psychological suffering of the frustration. Diasporic community writers of Indian diaspora like Meena Alexander, Anita Desai, Kamala Markanadaya, Bharti Mukherjee, Uma Parameshwaram, Suniti Namjoshi, Nergis Dalal, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy and many more are known for the contemporary approach in their novels. In this row of Indian diasporic women English novelists, an outstanding writers name is to be included is Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. She is a creative writer

who makes her prominent place in the field of literature. She focuses various cultural issues and things related to Indian-American culture in her novels. The present undertaken research work is based on analysis of Indian culture and tradition in her six selected novels.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian by birth and settled now in America. She is a committed novelist, poet, short story writer, professor, essayist book reviewer, columnist and activist. Her works have been translated into twenty-nine languages, including Dutch, Hebrew and Japanese. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is born on 29th July 1956 in Guruap Village of Burdwan district in Calcutta (Now Kolkata) west Bengal and known as Chitralekha Banerjee to her family and friends. She studies at Loreto house a convent school runs by Irish nuns. She attended the college at the University of Calcutta and immigrated to the United State of America in 1976 when she was nineteen years old. Divakaruni pursued a master's degree at Wright state University in Dayton, Ohio, USA. To begin and continue her education in United State, she had to earn money in order to it she took up a variety of odds jobs, including babysitting, selling merchandise in an Indian Boutique, slicing bread in a bakery and washing instruments in a science lab. She did her Ph.D. on Christopher Marlowe from the University of California, Berkeley in 1985. She wrote 16 novels and books and children poetry and anthologies. Being a creative world-famous writer she is recognized with many prestigious awards. Her two novels 'The Mistress' of spices and 'sister of my heart' are adopted into films.

Review of Literature:

Pushpa D. Dixit in her book *Indian Culture and Feminine Sensibility in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Novels* depict a pleasant typical tale of self-discovery which is spiked with the elements of mystery, suspense and supernatural elements. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*

explores the idea of isolation and identity, not only personal but also cultural. The characters in the novel frequently encounter crisis of identity, which is tied to inabilities to settle the American identity with their Indian identity. Rakhi, the off spring of immigrants, is born to the hyphenated existence - Asian American. Before she discovers the dream journals of her mother, she has been creating a sense of homeland through photos of India and other images available through globalized networks of communication. The daughter has never been to India but is determined to identity her "roots" so that she understands her identity as an Asian American.

Western culture revolves round rationality and eastern culture is predominantly spirituals in its approach. There is a radical difference in the way of thinking and perceiving things between the occident and orient. The word culture is deriving from French word 'Culutra' which means to cultivate and to grow. Therefore, culture suggest a continuous process of growth; the means of education, discipline and training. Both cultures are diametrically opposed to each other. While western culture is based on the principals of materialism, Indian culture is based on the principals of spiritualism, this result in the moral dilemma faced by the characters in *mistress of spices*.

Present research work specially focuses on Indian culture and tradition depicted in the Divakaruni's six novels, which are mentioned in the chapter scheme. This research work will light on Indian rituals, clothes, religion, attires, habits, festivals and traditions.

Need and Significance of the study:

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, caste, creed, race, color, concept of universe and material objects acquired by a group of people in the course of generation through individuals and group striving.

It is the sums of the learned behavior of a group of people that are generally considered to the tradition of that people are transmitted from generation to the generation. India's cultures and tradition is among the world's oldest civilization in Indian begun about 4500 years ago.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni concentrated our attention to the fact that migration, immigration of various Indian people. While elaborating Indian culture, the novelist has remarkably rendered that even migrant culture people are dominated in western countries where they become victim of it.

Objectives of the study:

1) To study critically and explain the novelist's use of various art forms in a simplified way.
2) To study the overall contribution and place of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in postmodern writing.
3) To study the Indian culture and tradition in the eyes of Diasporic literature.
4) To investigate the various issues related to culture.
5) To suggest solutions to the issues of cultural conflicts.

Hypothesis:

1) Culture is vital genre in post-colonial literature.
2) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a Major Indian diasporic writer.
3) Culture is crucial part of literature.
4) To check Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's fictionalized ideologies about post colonialism presented by the complex relation between these two countries.
5) The characters in these novels have the impact of traditional approach towards the role of women in society.

6) The upheaval of women on immigrated land and their struggle for own identity and its need.
7) Colonizer try to rule on colonized through their culture.

Methodology:

To achieve the objectives of research, following methodology of research will be followed.

1) Reading the original text of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.
2) The analysis of each novel with the help of available critical text.
3) The study of various literary journals published till date.
4) The study of articles and literary review published in various newspapers.
5) Visiting various websites related to Diaspora and post-modern literature.

Scope and limitations:

Present research work focuses on the novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni which encircles cultural analysis and feminine approach as a core value of her writing. Therefore, it goes through culture, caste, religion, class, race, gender and nation.

This study is limited to literature of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni as follows:

1) Before we visit the Goddess (2016)
2) Oleander Girl (2013)
3) Queen of dream (2004)
4) The vine of Desire (2002)
5) The sister of my heart (1999)
6) The mistress of spices (1997)

Chapter Scheme:

The tentative chapter scheme is as follows:

The proposed research work is divided into five chapters.

Chapter - I

Introduction:

This is an initiatory chapter which focuses on the survey of English literature. This chapter also deals with the definition and meaning of culture. It will also tell biography of writer along with Indian-American culture and tradition. The traditional expectations from a girl, married lady, a wife and a daughter in law on the name of honor how they are burdened.

Chapter - II

Indian Culture and Tradition in *Before We Visit the Goddess* and *Oleander girl*

This chapter will focus on the Indian culture and tradition portrayed in two mentioned novels. It also deals with cultural problems and differences of two nations.

Chapter- III

Indian Culture and Tradition in *Queen of Dreams* and *The Vine of Desire*

This chapter deals with the conflicts and problems of characters due to cultural diversity. It also deals the Indian tradition that interpreting the dreams. These two novels through the characters and incidents depict the Indian culture, festivals, foods, habits, cloths, traditions and customs. The diversity in nations pays our attention through the novels.

Chapter - IV

Indian Culture and Tradition in *Sister of My Heart* and *The Mistress of Spices*

This chapter is close study of two Indian cousins namely Anju and Sudha who were born on the same day and lived together as sisters in a

joint family. Sudha and Anju describe their struggle with outdated Indian customs, the memories of their father, arranged marriages, separation, pregnancy, miscarriage and abortion. The central theme of the story is cultural difference of America and India, where we witness many incidences related to cultural classes.

Chapter – V

Conclusion:

The concluding chapter will be based on the hypothesis established in the earlier chapters. This chapter would sum up the arguments presented in all previous chapters. It would also highlight on culture as a 'complex term' and it raises conflicts. It will take a critical summary of the presenting chapters and also present the finding out of the said research. It will also explore the further avenues in the field of said research.

Bibliography:

A) Primary Sources

1) Divakaruni, B. Chitra. *Before we visit the Goddess.* Simon and Schuster book published, 2016.
2) Divakaruni, B. Chitra. *Oleander Girl.* Penguin Books Edition published, 2013.
3) Divakaruni, B. Chitra. *Queen of dreams.* Anchor Book, edition published, 2004.
4) Divakaruni, B. Chitra. *The vine of desire.* Abacus edition published 2002.
5) Divakaruni, B. Chitra. *Sister of my heart.* Black swan edition published, 1999.
6) Divakaruni, B. Chitra. *The mistress of spices.* Black swan edition published, 1997.

B) Secondary Sources:

1) Tylor, E. B. *Culture Definedin closer and B. Rosenberg Sociological Theory.* London, MacMillan, 1891.
2) Raymond, Williams. *Culture and Society 1788-1950.* Harmondworth: Penguin, 1963.
3) Hussain, Abidi, S. *The National Culture of India.* New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1978.
4) Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* London, Vintage, 1994.
5) Naik, M. K. *A History of Indian English Literature,* Sahitya Academy, 2012.
6) Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: Critical Introduction.* New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1998

Research Student

Mr. Satish Bhagwan Funne

Research Guide

Dr. Datta G. Sawant
Asst. Professor,
Dept. of English,
Toshniwal Arts, Commerce and Science College, Sengaon. Dist. Hingoli